# The Role of Political Parties in Political Representation of Tribes in Jharkhand Since 2000

**SYNOPSIS**

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**State-of-the-Art**

The political representation of tribal communities in Jharkhand has been a significant issue since the state's creation in 2000. Although 28 seats in the state assembly are reserved for tribal groups, not all tribes benefit equally. The larger tribes, such as the Santhal, Oraon, Munda, and Ho, dominate political representation, while smaller tribes are often left without a voice. Studies highlight that these four tribes hold not just political power, but also economic control due to their larger populations, more land ownership, and better access to education and jobs. Furthermore, recent literatures point out that many of the current tribal leaders come from the same political families, raising concerns about nepotism in tribal politics.

The proposed research will explore whether this imbalance in representation exists across all tribal communities and how political parties contribute to this issue. Additionally, the proposed study will investigate the level of political socialization within these communities—how much they understand and participate in the political process—and will look into the underrepresentation of tribal women in the Jharkhand state legislature.

**Review of Literature:**

The proposed study finds its theoretical moorings from the available literature contributed by experts, researchers, and scholars in the field of tribal politics and representation. These works have provided significant insights into the role of political parties, tribal movements, and the challenges of equal representation in Jharkhand. The most relevant works and literatures have been reviewed as follows:

**Ipshita Basu** in her work "**The Dilemmas of the Regional Parties in Jharkhand"** which is published in **2024** by **Oxford University Press** discusses the political challenges regional parties like Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) face while trying to balance the need for tribal representation with winning elections. She argues that, although these parties claim to protect tribal rights, they often focus on larger tribes for vote ban politics for example the Santhal, Munda, Oraon, and Ho, sidelining smaller tribal groups such as Asur, Baiga, Banjara, Bathudi, Bedia, Bhumij, Binjhia, Birhor, Birjia, Chero, Chik Baraik, Gond and many more. This work helps us to understand how regional political parties contribute to the dominance of certain tribes while leaving others politically marginalized. However, there is no explicit mention about the representation of other tribes in Jharkhand State Assembly since 2000, which is a potential research gap. Neither this work discusses about the Political Socialization, Political Nepotism nor about the role of political parties which could lead to parity among the

tribal groups in Political Representation, which has been the one of the important goals of this proposed research.

**Kali Nath Jha** in his literature "Jharkhand-**Ethnic and Jharkhandi Identity: A Post-Movement Analysis"** published in 2002 in Sage Journal discusses the original goals of the Jharkhand movement, which aimed at uplifting all tribes, however it failed in achieving its objectives. The literature highlights implicitly that only some certain tribes are benefitted after the formation of Jharkhand and most of the other tribal groups are marginalized. It is also reflected in Political domain where despite the reserved Vidhan Sabha constituencies for STs only major tribes such as Santhal, Oraon, Munda and Ho are able to dominate the political arena in Jharkhand and rest of them has remained powerless in Jharkhand Politics. However, the literature has the limitation, it does not explore the extent to which the marginalization of non-dominant tribes exists in Jharkhand. However, it provides a good insight on the topic.

**Stuart Corbridge** in his literature **Perversity and Ethnoregionalism in Tribal India: The Politics of Jharkhand** published in **1987** in **Political Geography Quarterly** critiques the assumption that India's tribal policies have been fully inclusive. He argues that the Jharkhand movement and the rise of regionalism were responses to the Indian state's failure to address the real needs of tribal communities. The work highlights historical context on how India's tribal policies led to dissatisfaction and the demand for statehood. The literature helps explain why Jharkhand's political landscape continues to be dominated by a few large tribes, despite constitutional protections for tribal groups. However, it does not provide any direct insight on the Political Representation of marginalized tribes of Jharkhand, neither this work helps us to understand the role played by Political Parties in tribal representation in Jharkhand.

**Asha Mishra** and Chittaranjan Kumar Paty in their **Tribal Movements in Jharkhand, 1857-2007** published in **2010** by **Concept Publishing Co**. This work offers a historical analysis of the various tribal movements in Jharkhand over a span of 150 years. It highlights how tribal struggles for land rights during the colonial era evolved into political demands for a separate state. The editors argue that the movements, while initially inclusive of all tribes, eventually favored larger tribes like the Santhal and Munda. This work is essential for understanding how the history of tribal movements has shaped the current political dynamics in Jharkhand.

**R.D. Munda and S. Bosu Mullick in** their work "**The Jharkhand Movement: Indigenous Peoples' Struggle for Autonomy in India"** which was published in **2003** by **IWGIA**, discuss about the Jharkhand movement, focusing on the fight for political and

economic autonomy by the state's indigenous peoples. This provides detailed accounts of how the movement started with economic issues like land rights and later transformed into a demand for political power. They highlight the internal challenges within the movement, including the dominance of certain tribes. This work helps us to understand the tribes in Jharkhand are not homogenous entity. Some of the tribes are dominant on the basis of population and resources and other are on the periphery. This work provides a sanction to the proposed research, the historical inequality among tribes have been translated in the political domain as well in the terms of representation in Jharkhand Vidhan Sabha.

**Abhay Xaxa and Ganesh N. Devy** in their work **Being Adivasi: Existence, Entitlements, Exclusion**, which is published in **2021** by **Vintage Publication**. This work examines the social, economic, and political exclusion of Adivasis (tribal groups) across India. The editors discuss how Adivasis, despite constitutional protections, continue to face exclusion from political power and economic opportunities. They argue that tribal identity is often used politically, but the benefits of political representation seldom reach the majority of the tribal population. This work helps frame the broader context of tribal exclusion and is relevant for understanding the political challenges faced by smaller tribes in Jharkhand. However, it is not directly related to the issue of tribal political representation in Jharkhand, but the socio-economic analysis of tribal groups of Jharkhand, help us to understand the Political Participation and socialization of tribal groups in Jharkhand.

**Alpa Shah** in her work **"In the Shadows of the State: Indigenous Politics, Environmentalism, and Insurgency in Jharkhand, India"** published in **2010** by **Duke University Press**. In this work, Shah examines the disconnect between tribal leaders and the rural poor in Jharkhand. She argues that tribal elites, who are associated with the major political parties, fail to represent the true interests of the tribal communities, namely the marginalized tribes. She also argues about the environmental issues which plays a major role in tribal politics, contributing to insurgency in the region. This work provides a framework and sanction that how the Politics of Jharkhand is guided by Nepotism.

**Raajneeti mein chaar janjaatiyon ka jalwa, raajnaitik pratinidhitv ke maamle mein Santhal sabse aage** a news article published in ***Danink Bhaskar News*** and is available in the official web portal, discusses the dominance of four major tribes—Santhal, Oraon, Munda, and Ho—in Jharkhand's political arena. This article explains that these tribes not only hold reserved seats but also win general seats in the state assembly. The dominance is attributed

to their larger population, economic power, and better access to education. It also raises concerns about nepotism, as many political leaders come from the same influential families. This source provides valuable insights into the ongoing challenges of fair tribal representation in Jharkhand. This article provides a sanction to the proposed research and encourage to study further.

**Problem to be Investigated**

The research aims to investigate whether all tribes in Jharkhand, especially smaller ones, are fairly represented in the state assembly. It is often seen that only dominant tribes have been successful in winning the seats in assembly elections. This proposed research will also explore whether political nepotism (power staying within certain families) plays a role in limiting representation and how political parties may be contributing to this issue by focusing on larger tribes for vote-bank purposes. Additionally, the proposed study will look into why so few tribal women are represented in the state legislature. The situation is even worse when it comes to women representation of smaller and non-dominant tribes. This proposed research will also try to check the political socialization of these smaller tribal communities to know the extent to which they understand the political process.

**Objective of the Investigation and Motivation**

The objectives of proposed research are:

1. To find out the role of political parties in the selection of candidates in reserved assembly constituencies in Jharkhand.
2. To find out the status of representation of tribal groups [small or large] in Jharkhand's state assembly.
3. To explore factors responsible for the concentration of political power in few tribal families, which might be preventing other tribal members from entering politics.
4. To assess the level of political awareness among smaller tribes and women in Jharkhand.
5. To identify the causes of less tribal women representation in the state legislature
6. To suggest the ways to encourage active political participation of smaller tribes including women.

**Motivation**

Motivation behind the proposed research stems from dedicated commitment to contribute to obtain the status of tribal representation in Jharkhand since 2000. Jharkhand is often termed as the Tribal State. However, it has been observed that only few tribes who are more in population and own more resources are only represented in the Jharkhand Vidhan Sabha. On the other hand, the smaller tribal groups have no representation. This proposed research is intended towards assessing the factors behind this issue, it will also examine the extent to which political parties are responsible for it. The research is particularly inspired to ensure parity among the tribal groups in political representation in order to empower them to decide their destiny to certain extent by becoming the part of policy making and execution.

**Research Questions**

The proposed research could have following research questions:

1. To what extent political parties in Jharkhand contribute to inadequate representation of smaller tribes in Vidhan Sabha?
2. How does political nepotism in tribal politics affect sharing of Political Power in Jharkhand?
3. What are the reasons for less women representation in tribes, especially the non-dominant tribes in Jharkhand?
4. Does manifesto of Political Parties are inclusive enough to represent the of smaller tribes and women in Jharkhand?
5. What is the level of Political Socialization among small and large tribes and how it prevents political representation of such tribes?

**Research Hypotheses**

The proposed research hypothesizes that:

- Larger tribes such as [Santhal, Oraon, Munda, and Ho] are always dominating the reserved constituencies of Jharkhand Legislative assembly.
- Political nepotism is an influential factor preventing other tribal groups from gaining political influence.

- Political parties always prioritize larger tribes for vote-bank reasons, neglecting smaller tribes.
- Other than Santhan, Oraon, Munda and Ho, rest of the tribes lack relative political socialization which led to less participation in the politics.
- Tribal women are under-represented in the state legislature, due to less attention given by political parties.

**Research Design and Methodology**

This proposed research will use both quantitative and qualitative approaches; which also include both **Probability** and **Non-Probability** Sampling methods.

**Probability Sampling Methods** will include:

- **Simple Random Sampling**: The proposed research will include systematic random sampling where the elements will be selected using the electoral list of the particular place. In this method of sampling every element or the member of the population has a known and equal chance of getting selected.
- **Cluster Sampling**: The proposed research will also undertake the cluster sampling in order to make the sample inclusive and representative. Using this method, a particular division will be selected, then district will be selected in Jharkhand and further a block and village using the probability sampling.
- **Stratified Random Sampling**: The proposed research will also include the stratified random sampling in order to include and represent the population with different age group and gender.

**Non-Probability Sampling Methods:**

- **Judgmental or Purposive Sampling:** The proposed research will also include the discourses with the eminent personalities who has expertise in the areas of tribal representation and role of political parties in underrepresentation of non-dominant tribes in Jharkhand.
- **Convenience Sampling:** The proposed research will also include the interviews of party leaders and their takes on the policies of their party which will help to develop better understanding of the issue. The proposed research will try to select the leader who are available easily for the interviews.

**Other Methods to be taken into account:**

- **Descriptive Method**: The researcher will try to describe the current political representation of tribal groups in Jharkhand. This will help to understand the degree and intensity to which the smaller tribes are ignored in terms of political representation.
- **Historical Method**: The research will also inculcate the historical approach to understand the causal relationship between the historical events and current political representation of tribes in Jharkhand.
- **Comparative Method**: The proposed research will include the comparative study of political representation of tribes in Jharkhand. It will include the Intra-State as well as Inter-State Comparison.
- **Evaluative & Analytical Method**: The research will gather first-hand accounts from tribal leaders, community members, and political representatives to understand their view on the proposed research. This will also help to understand the degree or political socialization and understanding of political system among different tribal group.

**Sources of data and tools to be used in the collection of data**

The proposed research will be based on primary sources and secondary sources.

The **primary sources** will include:

- **Surveys and Interviews**: These will help gather insights on political socialization and whether smaller tribes feel included in the political process. Interviews will also explore the experiences of tribal women in politics.

**Secondary sources** will be used for this proposed research includes:

- **Electoral Data**: Past election results will be studied to assess whether only a few families or larger tribes dominate the assembly, and if nepotism plays a role.

- **Party Manifestos**: These will be analyzed to see what political parties promise in terms of tribal and women's representation, and how those promises align with actual results.
- Apart from this online published works, governmental reports, articles from journals and newspapers will also be taken into account as the secondary sources to enrich the proposed research.

**Significance of the Study**

This study will provide a comprehensive understanding of how political representation works for tribal communities in Jharkhand. It will explore whether political power is shared fairly among tribes and whether political nepotism exists. The research will also shed light on the level of political socialization in different tribes, particularly smaller ones, and address the underrepresentation of tribal women in the state legislature. The findings will be valuable for political parties and policymakers to ensure a more equitable and inclusive political landscape for all tribes in Jharkhand.

**Analysis of data**

In the proposed research, the analysis of data will encompass both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. To analyze the collected data obtained through judgment sampling, basic mathematical and graphical tools will be employed, including percentages, pie charts, bar graphs. All quantitative tools will be utilized based on their appropriateness for the nature and requirements of the research. For research questions involving textual data obtained through judgment sampling, a qualitative approach will be adopted, with a focus on discovering genuine meanings and exploring new perspectives.

**Its Relevance to the Present-day Problem and Need of the Society**

As Jharkhand gets close to its 25th year as a state in 2025, there's an urgent need to make sure that all tribal groups, both big and small, have a fair voice in government. Jharkhand was formed to improve the lives of its indigenous communities, but even now, only a few big tribes are represented in politics. Smaller tribes often remain unheard, which stops the state from growing in a way that benefits everyone equally.

This study is important because it looks closely at how political parties operate and whether they are focusing only on larger tribes for political support. It also seeks to understand why so few tribal women are represented in the state assembly and how political power seems to stay within certain families. By highlighting these issues, this research aims to give useful insights to those in government, encouraging them to make policies that represent all tribes fairly.

In the long run, fair representation could help develop policies that benefit all tribal communities, not just a few. This research hopes to create awareness about the need for equal political opportunities, helping all tribal groups feel represented and included in the growth of Jharkhand. This study aims to contribute to a more united and fairer Jharkhand, where every tribal group, big or small, has a voice in shaping the future of the state.

**Contribution to the existing knowledge**

This research aims to shed light on the intricate issues surrounding tribal political representation in Jharkhand, especially in areas that are often overlooked. A central focus is on understanding if all tribal communities—particularly the smaller and less influential ones—are represented fairly in the political arena. This study delves into the functioning of political parties, the impact of political nepotism, and the reasons behind the limited representation of tribal women in Jharkhand's politics. Through this, it aims to fill key gaps in our understanding of whether the state's political system is genuinely inclusive.

Additionally, this research contributes to knowledge on political socialization among Jharkhand's tribes, focusing on how smaller groups engage with and understand the political process. This exploration highlights the importance of inclusive political awareness and active participation for all tribal communities. Ultimately, this study aims to provide a foundation for policies that support balanced representation and give every tribal group in Jharkhand a meaningful voice in governance.

**Future Work**

This research opens the door to multiple areas for further exploration, particularly on the representation and empowerment of Jharkhand's diverse tribal communities. Future studies could investigate possible reforms to the reservation system, looking at how these adjustments could create a more balanced political environment for smaller tribes that have

traditionally been marginalized. Changes in the practices of political parties, such as strategies to support a broader range of tribal candidates, could also be a promising area for future research, offering insights into how parties might foster inclusivity beyond the largest tribes.

Additionally, further research could focus on educational and outreach programs that improve political awareness and engagement within Jharkhand's tribal communities. Such programs could be especially beneficial for women and smaller tribes, helping them to understand political processes, exercise their rights more effectively, and increase their participation. By building on this research, future studies could explore how these programs might be tailored to address the unique cultural and social dynamics of Jharkhand's varied tribal groups.

One possible future direction is to look at whether giving smaller tribes better economic opportunities might also help them play a bigger role in politics. As these tribes make economic gains, they could naturally find a stronger voice in the political arena, becoming more active participants in Jharkhand's political scene. This could give us a better understanding of how improving livelihoods can go hand-in-hand with better political representation, helping these communities take a more visible role in Jharkhand's politics. In this way, future research could contribute to creating a political landscape in Jharkhand that's fairer and more inclusive for all tribal groups, ensuring everyone has a chance to be truly represented.

**Tentative Chapterization**

1. Political Representation of Tribes in Jharkhand: An Overview
2. Constitutional Provisions and Political Representation of Tribes with special reference to Jharkhand.
3. Political Nepotism and Political Representation of Tribes in Jharkhand.
4. Role of Political Parties in Political Socialization and Tribal Representation: A Comparative Analysis of dominant and non-dominant tribes.
5. Status of Women Political Representation in Jharkhand.
6. Findings

7. Conclusion & Suggestions

**References**


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